

Amendments to the Claims:

Please cancel claims 11 and 19-21, and please amend claims 12, 13, and 15 as follows:

1. (Previously Presented) A method in a computer system for providing computer equipment to a customer, comprising:

receiving an indication of an available piece of the computer equipment;
updating a database to indicate a lease of the computer equipment to the customer in return for a payment from the customer corresponding at least in part to a length of time the customer leases the computer equipment;
receiving an indication from the customer that the lease is voluntarily terminated after an arbitrary, customer-selected time period has elapsed, without incurring a penalty to the customer; and
updating the database to indicate that the computer equipment is received back from the customer.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the customer is a first customer and the payment is a first customer payment, and wherein the method further comprises updating the database to indicate sale of the computer equipment to a second customer, or lease of the computer equipment to the second customer by providing the computer equipment to the second customer and receiving a second customer payment corresponding at least in part to the length of time the second customer leases the computer equipment.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
indicating a commitment to leasing a selected number of computer components from a component vendor;
updating the database to indicate leasing at least one of the computer components from the vendor by receiving the computer component from

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the vendor and paying the vendor at predetermined intervals a periodic vendor payment corresponding to the cost of the computer component multiplied by an interest rate factor and divided by a total number of predetermined intervals that elapse until the estimated value of the component is zero; and

updating the database to indicate payment of the periodic vendor payment after the total number of predetermined intervals has elapsed.

4. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 3, further comprising updating the database to indicate purchasing the at least one component from the vendor and selling or leasing the computer equipment to another customer by providing the computer equipment to the another customer and receiving payments from the another customer while continuing to pay the vendor the periodic vendor payment.

5. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
indicating leasing of at least one component of the computer equipment from a vendor by receiving the at least one component from the vendor and paying the vendor at predetermined intervals a periodic vendor payment corresponding to the cost of the at least one component multiplied by an interest rate factor and divided by a number of time intervals that elapse until an estimated value of the at least one component is zero; and
indicating purchasing the at least one component from the vendor for a purchase amount after a selected number of time intervals have passed and after paying a selected number of periodic vendor payments, the purchase amount corresponding to a remaining value of the at least one component.

6. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
indicating leasing of at least one component of the computer equipment from the vendor by receiving the at least one component from the vendor and

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paying the vendor at predetermined intervals a periodic vendor payment corresponding to the cost of the at least one component multiplied by an interest rate factor and divided by a number of time intervals that elapse until the value of the at least one component is zero; and

indicating continuing to lease the at least one components and pay the vendor the periodic vendor payment after the number of time intervals has passed.

7. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein updating a database to indicate a lease of the computer equipment includes indicating receipt from the customer of a plurality of periodic payments having equal values.

8. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein updating a database to indicate a lease of the computer equipment includes indicating receipt from the customer a plurality of periodic payments with each successive payment being less than the preceding payment.

9. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
indicating refurbishing of at least one component of the computer equipment after receiving the computer equipment back from the customer; and
indicating transmission of the computer equipment with the refurbished at least one component to another customer.

10. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising indicating payment of an interest fee for at least one computer component.

11. (Cancelled)

12. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 11 wherein the customer is a first customer and the payment is a first customer payment, and wherein the method further comprises selling the computer equipment to a second customer, or leasing the computer equipment to the second customer by providing the computer equipment to the second customer and receiving a second customer payment corresponding at least in part to the length of time the second customer leases the computer equipment.

13. (Currently Amended) ~~The method of claim 11, further comprising:~~
A method for providing computer equipment to a customer, comprising:

leasing at least one component of the computer equipment from a vendor by
receiving the at least one component from the vendor and paying the
vendor a periodic vendor payment;

installing the at least one component in the computer equipment;

leasing the computer equipment to a customer in return for payment from the
customer corresponding at least in part to the length of time the customer
leases the computer equipment;

receiving an indication from the customer that the computer equipment lease is
terminated after an arbitrary, customer-selected time period has elapsed,
without incurring a penalty to the customer; and

receiving the computer equipment back from the customer.

14. (Original) The method of claim 13, further comprising:

ceasing to receive payment from the customer upon termination of the computer
equipment lease; and

ceasing to pay the vendor for the computer component.

15. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~44~~13 wherein installing the component in the computer equipment includes installing the at least one component in a personal computer, notebook computer or server.

16. (Previously Presented) A method in a computer system for providing computer equipment to a customer, comprising:

updating a database to indicate that at least one component of the computer equipment is leased from a vendor, the lease including receiving the at least one component from the vendor and paying the vendor a periodic vendor payment;

receiving an indication that the at least one component is installed in the computer equipment;

updating a database to indicate that the computer equipment is leased to a customer in return for a payment from the customer corresponding at least in part to a length of time the customer leases the computer equipment; and

updating a database to indicate that the computer equipment is received back from the customer and the lease with the customer is voluntarily terminated after an arbitrary, customer-selected period of time has elapsed without penalty to the customer.

17. (Original) The method of claim 16, further comprising updating a database to indicate continued payments to the vendor for the component after having paid the vendor a total amount for the component that is at least equal to an initial value of the component, while leasing the computer equipment to the customer or another customer.

18. (Original) The method of claim 16 wherein the customer is a first customer and the payment is a first customer payment, and wherein the method further

comprises updating a database to indicate a sale of the computer equipment to a second customer, or a lease of the computer equipment to the second customer by providing the computer equipment to the second customer and receiving a second customer payment corresponding at least in part to the length of time the second customer leases the computer equipment.

19-21. (Cancelled)

22. (Previously Presented) A method for obtaining computer equipment, comprising:

leasing the computer equipment from a leasing entity by receiving the computer equipment from the entity and paying to the entity at least one payment corresponding at least in part to a length of time the computer equipment is leased from the entity; and

voluntarily returning the computer equipment to the entity without penalty after an arbitrary period of time has elapsed.

23. (Original) The method of claim 22 wherein leasing the computer equipment from the leasing entity includes paying the entity a plurality of periodic payments having equal values.

24. (Original) The method of claim 22 wherein leasing the computer equipment from the entity includes paying the entity a plurality of periodic payments with each successive payment being less than the preceding payment.

25. (Original) The method of claim 22 wherein leasing the computer equipment includes leasing a personal computer, notebook computer or server.

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26. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 22 wherein paying to the entity at least one payment comprises paying a plurality of periodic payments before the start of the period for which the computer equipment is leased.

27. (Previously Presented) A method in a computer system for providing computer components to a component assembler, comprising:

updating a database to indicate receiving from the assembler a commitment to lease at least a selected number of computer components;

updating a database to indicate leasing each computer component to the assembler, the leasing including providing the computer components to the assembler and receiving a plurality of periodic payments from the assembler; and

indicating continued periodic payments from the assembler for at least one of the components after having received total payments from the assembler for the computer component at least equal to an initial value of at least one computer component.

28. (Original) The method of claim 27, further comprising indicating ceasing to receive periodic payments from the assembler while a piece of computer equipment in which the at least one component is installed and is not leased or sold to a customer of the assembler.

29. (Original) The method of claim 27 wherein indicating continued periodic payments from the assembler includes indicating periodic payments received while a piece of the computer equipment in which the at least one component is installed is leased to a customer of the assembler.

30. (Previously Presented) A tangible computer-readable medium containing instructions capable of causing a computer to perform a method, comprising:

tracking an identity of a piece of computer equipment;

tracking lease payments made by a customer leasing the piece of computer equipment;

receiving an indication that the customer has terminated the lease of the computer equipment at a voluntary, arbitrary, customer-selected point in time; and

ceasing to track lease payments made by the customer without incurring penalty to the customer for terminating the lease at the arbitrary, customer-selected point in time.

31. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable medium of claim 30 wherein the instructions are further capable of causing the computer to perform a method comprising:

tracking an identity of a component of the computer equipment leased from a component vendor; and

tracking lease payments made to the component vendor.

32. (Previously Presented) A computer system for tracking computer leasing information, comprising:

an identity tracker for tracking an identity of a piece of computer equipment;

a lease payment tracker for tracking lease payments made by a customer leasing the piece of computer equipment; and

a termination tracker for receiving an indication that the customer has terminated the lease of the computer equipment at a voluntary, arbitrary, customer-selected point in time without incurring a penalty to the customer for terminating the lease at the customer-selected point in time.

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33. (Original) The computer system of claim 32 wherein the identity tracker is a first identity tracker and the lease payment tracker is a first lease payment tracker, and wherein the system further comprises:

a second identity tracker capable of tracking an identity of a component of the piece of computer equipment leased from a component vendor; and

a second lease payment tracker capable of tracking lease payments made to a component vendor for the component of the piece of computer equipment.